

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD STEFAN'S VODET-DISHOND EMU-LATES THE CATS.

The saloon of the Hendrik Hudson would have been a sore sight to the eyes of Menzies, the Scotch steward, if he had been there to see its terrible dishevelment. Round the table four dirty, sheep skinned soldlers sat and fingered a filty pack of cards. In each mouth was stock an evil smelling cigar, and innumerable stains of jugs and tumblers marked the smooth ma-hogany. The cellaret doors had been burst open by the kicks of lusty boots, and books, broken crockery and a heap of little knickknneks strewed the floor. The company had evidently feasted where it slept. The dirty plates and knives of the previous evening meal were tossed carelessly into a corner. unwashed and sticky. The mud of shore and forest was thick on carpets

One of the men took a sup from a jug beside him and cursed aloud.
"To call this thin wash liquor." he complained. "I'd rather have the scourings of a vodki cup whence all had gone but the smell."

"Hog's drink, cat lap," agreed another. "Never a sup of real spirit can I find aboard—nothing but this watery

Menzies would have been delighted at this. None but he and his master knew the hiding place of the grog-room, by no means a bad plan on board a yacht if you can trust your steward, an exceedingly bad one if

The claret would have been the delight of a gourmet. Among these sav-age Tartars nothing short of vitrioi-and cheep voiki is that—deserved an encomium. So, though they continued to sup at the jug perfunctorily, they didn't cense to condemn the contents. The britation born of their unaccustomed swillings made them quarrel hugely over their cards. They bandled necusations of cleating freely from one to the other. The atmosphere was thick with colsome smoke and heated

A buil came from their compades of the deck. One of them thrust his head below the raised skylight, summoning them to come quickly. They receied up the companion and stared stupidly round them across sea and shore. One of the men who had been on deck pointed to where a cleft in the ring of rocks showed the cliffs of the farther bay. About 300 yards away a man could be seen digging methodically at the crag foot. Beside him lay a brown object, indistinguishable at that dis-tance. The fellow was throwing up the sand energetically and looked neither to the right hand nor the left There was but the one narrow slit in the ringing rocks that gave view upor him at all. It was evident he knew nothing of the nearness of the yacht

Yaroslaff, the corporal, anapped his singers in his delight. "What should man bury here? quoth he. "What shou man bury here?" quoth he. "Wh what we're bemoaning the want of liquor, my boys; good liquor. I've a ways heard this was a bay for the smugglers. He's leaving this for the Lapps without a doubt. Now shall we both preserve the law of the empire and get refreshment fit for gentlemen and soldiers. But quietly, you little pigeons, quietly, and we'll see what the old scoundrel's up to."

They stole silently across the gangrocks till in a circle they stood behind the man. Unconsciously he toiled on at his digging, and the grins grew up-on the soldlers' faces. Finally, as he delved away. Viadimir, a young re-cruit, contained himself no longer. He burst into a roar of laughter and strode forward, holding his sides, nor were the others slow to join in his hilarious bawlings. The man started up with a jerk of surprise. He faced round upon them tremblingly, his eyes wide and lifted his hands to the corporal appealingly.
"Mercy, captain, mercy! it is but a

little I store against the winter. The corporal smote his shoulder in

good humored ferocity.
"Son of a deel" he shouted. "As if I didn't know you and your ways! Why should Statis, the forester, store good liquor ext here? You want to trade with the Lapps, a thing strictly forbidden, as well you know, you des-perate old contrabandist! New a great fine will be due from you."

"Mercy!" said old Stefan, groveling. "Mercy," said old Stefan, groveling.
"Mercy, sir! It is a little, little barrel,
and I am of the poorest. All mine is
yours if you but forcear the reporting
of me."

"This," said Yaroslaff, picking up the barrel, "is neither yours nor mine. It belongs to the state, in whose name I confiscate it. But our Little Father, the cznr, niways judges the laborer worthy of the hire. I have exhausted myself in tracking this foul piece of smugglery. I need a tonic. Here I shall find it. Whose voiki is it, O

"Ivan's," answered the old jager,

trembling, "but"-"Ivan's!" yelled the corporal, "You

He raised the keg and took a mouth-ful. His eyes rolled. He gasped as he set it down and slapped his chest

"Ivan's liquid fire, by all that's bely?" he bawied. "Nay," as the oth-ers crowded round, demanding their share, "may, lads! This inust be wast-ed in no unmethodical swillings on share, "may, lads! This must be wasted in no unmethodical swillings on a forsaken shore. Let us have it in well ordered cups in the comfort of the cabin. The court adjudges Stefan to hard labor as watch on deck while we dispose of the spoil." And, tucking the keg under his arm, he marched back to the ship, while the soldiers mired their rude attempts at wit on

the old forester, who followed then

submissively. The six awaggered joyously across the gaugway and descended into the cabin. Stefan they bade with many imprecations to stay on deck and sum mon them if any one appeared. Ther shortly from the cabin came soundof the clink of glass and botsterom tonsts and jestings, rising at last to uproar as the hot liquor fumed into their brains,

their brains.

The turmoil insted but a short time The jests graw less frequent, the snatches of song more maudiin. Final ly both died away into incoherent mutterings. The corporal's head began to nod ominously and suddenly thudded forward upon the table. One of his tipsy comrades solemnly emptied a class of the spirit over it. The fellow glass of the spirit over it. The fellow one upon the other, drinking still will automatic insistence, clutching the glasses with nerveless hands. Fire one and then another yawned, rubbes his eyes, looked round gapingly and then surged forward till he, too, like his lender, rolled his head upon the table and sispt stertorously. Soon no sound came up to the watcher on deck save snores, a round chorus of heavy grunts that shook the tumblers on the table and made the very deck planks tremble.

Cautiously Stefan peered beneath the open skylight and looked down on the six motionless bodies below. Satisfied with his scrutiny, he withdrew his head and descended into the cabin. He examined each man carefully and shock his shoulders, clapping his hand upon them heavily while he bawled aloud the name of each torpid sot. No answer came to his callings. Not one of them so much as winked an eye. He came on deck again and went forward. Selecting a coil of rope, he took it back with him and with slow, me-thodical action took out his clasp knife and cut it into short lengths. With these he bound each man securely hand and foot. Then, ranging them in a row upon the cabin floor, he placed a cushion or footstool beneath each head and left them there, rigid, unconscious, lashed up into the similitude of half a dozen graven images



He sat there, waiting, watching, looking into the night, fully bore it on deck and poured it into the sea. Then, lighting his pipe, he drew a deck chair beside the taffrail and as the evening closed about him sat there, waiting, watching, looking

into the night, alort and expectant.

Five miles away beside the castle moat stood Hilmar and Desmond. Girt about his waist was a long coll of cord, and sheathed in his belt was his knife, flanked by a file and a brace of pistols. In his hand he held a crowbar. For an instant he staid and looked down at his companion. The moment for the attempt was come.

"Goodby, Hilmar-dear!" The last word came shyly and haltingly. He

word came sayly and haltingly. He looked at her half doubtfully. She turned her eyes up to his wistfully. They were shining with unshed tears, but her glance was brave and there was no tremor in her voice.

"Goodby, Desmond, dear!" she answered, with a tender inflection on the word that had come so falteringly from him. She pronounced it steadily. Somehow her lips closed over it with a delicious pout. Desmond wavered and looked at her almost inquiringly Then he stooped and kissed her and met with no repulse. With the touch of that sweet fare-

well on his lips and no room in his heart for fear or aught but triumph he turned silently from her and caught at a poplar bough. He swung his legs across it, rose up and gained another, higher. Thus from bough to bough he swung himself till 30 feet above the ground he reached the great limb that shot out above the water, stretching for toward the castle walls. He made his way along it inch by inch, desisting only when its drooping twigs told him that the farthest point of safety was reached. He unshing the cord from his waist, attached to one end his crowbar and eliently began to awing it to and fro. Backward and forward it pendu-"You's!" yelled the corporal. "You divined on fitth seum of Lapps the divinent elixir ever distilled! Of a surety, Stefan, you are imbedle as well as particularly avil. I taste to see if you le."

He raised the keg and took a mouthful. His eyes rolled. He gasped as he set if Awa and should be chest beauth him. The sulf was bridged.

beside him. The gulf was bridged.

He waited a minute or two to see if any secury had heard the clang of the meeting iron. Faintly up and down the courtyird he could hear the regular beat of steps. These stopped, and the

vould be less likely to visit them dur-ng the next hour or two. 'the light napped out, and the bang of a shutdoor re-echoed in the hollow of the yard. There was a fingle of keys as the warder drew them from the Then to and fro the monotonous

peat of the sentry was resumed.

Desmond gripped the rope with both tands and swung his knees across it. t ran at a steep angle toward the oof, and it took him all his strength o restrain too swift a descent. Checkng his way strenuously with alternate graspings of the cord, he slid down and alighted beside the window grat-

He had to use the utmost caution to prevent dislodging the stone roof slabs. Splinters, the result of many a winer's frost, lay about him in heaps. Fortunately those he displaced fell st-nost noiselessly into the stream. Any one hearing them might mistake them for the rise of feeding fish. He took from his pocket a little jar of grease and smeared it on the central bar of the grating. Then with his rasp he began to rub at the iron, eating steadily through the metal, which was rust-ed by storm and damp to half its orig-inal thickness. He kept to his work without ceasing, save to rub now and again more grease into the niche he made, swinging the long flie backward and forward, pressing desperately upon the bars, gasping with excite-ment and the energy of his toil, the perspiration raining from his forehead. Half an hour of unceasing toil, and the bar broke. Rising to his feet, he sought a sure footheld and then seized the severed end and tore it slowly back. The metal, softened by exposure, gave under his strenuous tugs, Unfortunately as he bent and pried it back the far end snapped at the angle of the bend. With a ciatter that sounded out with horrible distinctness he fell rone upon the roof. He lay still, his cart throbbing in great beats that seemed to suffocate him. The steps of the sentry censed in the courtyard. He could but have heard the clatter, and his suspicions were aroused. Then a his suspicious were aroused. Then a desperate idea came into Desmond's head. "Lee-ow, yee-ow!" he miawed, the tremor of his voice giving a particularly feline ring to the sounds. "Yee-ow, fzz-st!" And he spat and scrabbled at an imaginary rival, dislodging one or two bits of shale reck-

"Ugh!" grunted the sentry and, pick ing up a pebble, cast it at the roof and resumed his walk down the center of the courtyard. The stone fell within a yard of Desmond's face and, rebounding, struck him over the eye. If he could have found it, he feit he should like to preserve it as a precious

He resumed his work at the next ear with greater caution, and, though it was stouter than the first, an hour's work saw it, too, broken. He twisted it aside and fastened his remaining rope to the side of the grating. Then wriggling his body feet first through the opening, he caught the loose end between his hands and slid down into

the darkness of the barn.

The prisoners must have heard his operations on the roof, but no sound came up to him. He landed gently on the floor, let go the rope and began to feel round him with groping hands. For a yard or two he crept about in the darkness, finding nothing. He gave a slight whisper. No answer came. With beating heart he strode forward playing out his bands before forward, playing out his hands before him. Nothing met his touch but a blank wall. With sickening disap-pointment at his heart he crawled round the walls, feeling, stretching grasping at emptiness. He crosse grasping at emptiness. He crossed and recrossed the floor aimlessly. The result was everywhere the same. His adventure was vain. The barn was empty, the floor smooth and veld as when Hilmar played in it in the days

of long ago.

As this was borne upon him he turned despairingly to the rope to climb forth again and renew his search elsewhere. He clutched the rope and began to haul himself up hand by hand. There were a quiver and a grate from above. The iron framework stirred and began to move. He drew himself up with quick, desperate jerks. Too up with quice, desperate jerks. Too late! With a crash and a clang the bars came away from the walls and fell clattering to the bard stone pavement. A corner struck him, and, bleeding and half stunned, he rolled upon the floor, a prisoner indeed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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whole bolles.

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His Happy Future.

The Saunterer happened to be diring with a friend the other evening, and of course the table's population included the inevitable 5-year-old boy. The latter had fallen into the habit of ask-ing for all kinds of impossible things. being refused and going howling from the room in obedience to the command. He would re-enter two minutes later

with a half dozen dirty streaks and

a bright 1-accept-your-apology smile on his face.
On this evening, after the third exon this evening, after the third excursion, be suddenly conceived an affection for the sugar bowl. He reached
for it, got it and as promptly gave it
up to response to the threatening hand
of his mother. His father glanced up
casually, waiting for the usual outburst before he sent him out, but intend the abild's four brightend and stead the child's face brightened, and his eyes twinkled with anticipation.
"What are you so glad about, Wil-lie?" asked his father.

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